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HR Practices and Digital Transformation Readiness in Multicultural Healthcare Workforces: A Study of Healthcare Organizations in the UAE

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INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation is huge in healthcare now. It covers AI, electronic health records, and telemedicine, but only works if the staff is up to speed. This poses a special challenge in the UAE, given its super-diverse workforce. This paper explores how HR can aid healthcare settings in the UAE through these transitions. Research shows that being prepared hinges on robust HR practices. Effective HR not only helps employees pick up new skills but also keeps them motivated.

For these systems to click, employees must see HR policies as fair. When they do, there's a much greater willingness to embrace change. This is crucial in the UAE because of its culturally diverse workforce. Thus, healthcare providers should focus on crafting solid plans to support their staff and tailor HR procedures to fit their unique needs before rolling out any new technology.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. For investigating the importance of human resource strategies to prepare for change within health care organizations
2. To analyze how the diversity of employees influences the implementation of innovations.
3. To suggest ways to help employees adjust to new technologies.
4. To provide health care organizations with recommendations regarding the transformation readiness process.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The development of technology has brought about a complete¹ revolution in the healthcare system. However, the use of advanced systems must be followed by attempts at matching the workers with the adoption of technology. Employees who are not ready for it may fail in the technology transformation. HR practices act as an important mechanism through which employees adapt to technology and help develop their satisfaction and motivation²

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this research the recommended method is qualitative descriptive research through secondary data analysis. In this case, the research will draw its information from peer-reviewed academic journals, books, conference proceedings and reports published by international health care and education agencies. Other sources besides them are major academic databases like indexed journals on Scopus and Google Scholar, and also reports published by international organizations like WHO,

¹Davenport, T. H., & Ronanki, R. (2018). Artificial intelligence for the real world. *Harvard Business Review*, 96(1), 108–116.

UNESCO and educational institutions for health care. The research has considered about 40-50 academic papers connected with the digital transformation in education, cultural intelligence systems and technology adoption models. For current study the identified themes were Human Resource practices and transformation of workforce in health care. The themes that were found for the current research include Human Resource practices and transformation of workforce in health care organizations, and multicultural workforce management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Becker & Huselid (1998): Strategic Human Resource Management, through the alignment of individuals' skills with an organization's strategy, strategic HR management provides numerous advantages. According to Becker and Huselid's research, companies that use performance management systems, training programs, and skill development are likely to execute the procedures in a much more creative and adaptable way. Strategic HR aids employees in learning new technology in the context of digitalization.

Ulrich (1997): The Strategic Ally of Human Resources. According to Ulrich, HR departments can become strategic partners in the growth of the business in addition to performing administrative duties. According to Ulrich, HR departments are responsible for managing organizational change and building organizational and employee competences in the process of putting digitization initiatives into practice. HR professionals should encourage a flexible workforce and support learning.

Davis developed TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) as a means to analyze users' acceptance of the digital platform. According to the theory, the key determinants were the variables of usefulness and ease of use; if the staff believed that the use of the digital platform would make their work more effective and is easy to manage, then it was expected that the

staff members would accept the digital platform. TAM became widely used in healthcare companies

Venkatesh et al. (2003): UTAUT (Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology) was presented by Venkatesh et al. in 2003. Therefore, performance expectation, effort expectation, social influences, and facilitating conditions are the four main discriminators of earlier technology adoption theories, according to the UTAUT theory. According to this hypothesis, any kind of technology is more easily adopted in an organization with training and supporting leaders. UTAUT has been used a lot to explain why healthcare workers want to embrace new technology.

Kane et al. **Digital transformation and jobs- by: Shawn Mindell20, Peter B.Mayer(2015)** Publication date: March 2015. According to Kane et al., it should be noted that the labor force and culture are more crucial elements in initiating digital transformation than technology itself. From the research results, one can understand that the success of digital transformation was much more achievable in cases where the companies had extensive employee skills improvement programs, and their executives were positively disposed toward such initiatives.

Westerman et al: To implement digital transformation, an organization should possess digital capabilities along with leadership capabilities. According to the results by Westerman et al., it is necessary to focus on developing organizational learning, individual skills, and change management to attain

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2. Becker, B. E., & Huselid, M. A. (1998). High performance work systems and firm performance: A synthesis of research and managerial implications. *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, 16, 53–101
 3. Ulrich, D. (1997). *Human resource champions: The next agenda for adding value and delivering results*. Harvard Business School Press.
 4. Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(3), 319–340.

digital maturity. Such capabilities can be gained through recruitment, training, education, and leadership development.

OECD (2021): Digital skills were the core problem, mentioned by the WHO. Workforce readiness was one of the key factors that contributed to the successful implementation of the global Strategy on Digital Health. The researchers propose continuous professional development programs that will allow clinicians to obtain the needed digital skills in modern healthcare systems. OECD (2021): Skills for Digital Transformation. According to the data provided by the OECD, the human factor is one of the core elements in guaranteeing the success of the transition into the digitalized economy. In this case, we expect people to possess technical skills, flexibility, critical thinking skills, and continuous learning capabilities. Some human resource management practices in this sphere will help in achieving such goals

Deloitte (2024): Human Capital Trends and Digital Readiness: Companies with a strong workforce agility, learning in digital, and the employee experience tend to succeed in their transformation journey in the Deloitte human capital trends report around the globe. Furthermore, Deloitte's human capital trends report states that if people are provided with sufficient

5. Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B., & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view. *MIS Quarterly*, 27(3)

6. Kane, G. C., Palmer, D., Phillips, A. N., Kiron, D., & Buckley, N. (2015). Strategy, not technology, drives digital transformation. *MIT Sloan Management Review*.

7. Westerman, G., Bonnet, D., & McAfee, A. (2014). Leading digital: Turning technology into business transformation. Harvard Business Review Press.

8. OECD. (2021). OECD digital economy outlook 2021: Digital transformation for jobs and skills. OECD Publishing.

training and support from leaders, they tend to embrace changes and technology.

Al Darmaki et al (2023): Digital Competence of UAE Healthcare Organizations: Al Darmaki et al investigated the development of digital competence among healthcare workers in the UAE. The survey cited in the study indicated that the constant training programs have a great impact on making the healthcare workers use the technologies successfully. It was recommended that digital competence should be a part of the HR strategy in healthcare institutions.

Mukhalalati et al. (2023): Workforce Diversity in Healthcare Education and Practice. Mukhalalati et al discussed the issue of cultural diversity within healthcare institutions in the Middle East region. It was recommended by the researchers that cooperation, communication, and employees' engagement would improve due to the presence of organizational policies that consider the cultural differences.

Al-Shaer et al. (2023): The connection between cultural intelligence and employee performance. The research conducted by Al-Shaer and others also shows that employees with high levels of CQ have high levels of flexibility, good communication skills, and cooperative tendencies. They found out that HR functions that promote cooperation among employees and improve their intercultural understanding were beneficial to culturally diverse firms and contributed to digital transformation initiatives.

9. Al Darmaki, A., Al Kaabi, M., & Al Hammadi, F. (2023). Digital competence and technology adoption among healthcare professionals in the United Arab Emirates. *International Journal of Healthcare Management*, 16(4), 512–523.

10. Deloitte. (2024). 2024 global human capital trends: Thriving beyond boundaries. Deloitte Insights.

11. Mukhalalati, B., Al Hamad, A., Alrajeh, M., & Alhazmi, A. (2023). Workforce diversity in healthcare education and practice: Challenges and

Hassan Ali et al (2025): Employee flexibility and creativity. Hassan Ali was part of a team of researchers who explored the issue of 'the relationship between creative work practices and employee adaptability in healthcare'. They found out that 'adaptable employees were more likely to learn new technologies and get involved in innovations'. The importance of HR development initiatives designed to foster adaptability among employees was realized. As evidenced from the results of the research, workforce diversity could bring about creativity and sustainable organizations under good management. Workforce diversity contributes positively to organizational effectiveness and creativity due to its contribution to organizational diversity in terms of problem-solving ideas, skills, and knowledge base.

Eidan and Huseina (2026): Strategic Workforce Development in Healthcare: Eidan and Huseina highlighted the significance of combining strategies of workforce development with the goals of organizational change. Workforce engagement, development of digital skills, and leadership development were viewed as the crucial factors in terms of workforce preparedness in digitally transformed healthcare organizations.

SYNTHESIS OF LITERATURE

Research shows that effective operations in the Human Resources department are important for helping employees prepare for digital transformation. Activities like training, supporting managers, keeping employees engaged, managing performance, and developing talent all play a big role in how

opportunities in the Middle East region. BMC Medical Education, 23(1), 1–12.

12. Al-Shaer, M., Alshurideh, M., Al Kurdi, B., & Salloum, S. A. (2023). Cultural intelligence and employee performance in multicultural organizations. International Journal of Organizational Analysis, 31(4), 1125–1142

well people adapt to changes. Additionally, the research highlights that in organizations with diverse cultures, HR policies should be inclusive. This helps employees feel more comfortable and willing to embrace new technologies.

Even though there are significant interests concerning both change and workforce management, the number of academic papers that focus on the contribution of HR strategy towards companies' readiness for digital transformation remains extremely low, especially if we talk about healthcare organizations located in the United Arab Emirates with a multicultural workforce.

RESEARCH GAP

First of all, there has been emphasis on technological change through system implementation and the use of artificial intelligence applications. However, less attention has been devoted to understanding the reaction of workers when using new technologies. Considering that the digital readiness of the workforce is vital for any firm to succeed, we need to dig deeper into how Human Resources can play its part in empowering the workforce.

Secondly, the fact remains that Human Resources plays a central role in deciding the performance of a firm, yet not many studies examine the role played by Human Resources factors such as training & development, performance management, and employee involvement in facilitating digital transformation. These studies have been conducted separately for these areas.

Thirdly, healthcare is a special industry where regulations play a major role in the decision-making process, and the use of technology may affect the quality of services provided to patients. Although this is an industry too, not many studies are dedicated to the digital readiness of firms belonging to the

healthcare sector, especially those in the UAE, whose healthcare industry is rapidly growing.

Fourthly, in practice, healthcare companies in the UAE have a workforce consisting of employees of different nationalities, adding another level of complexity. People coming from different nationalities might behave differently, communicate differently, learn things differently, and even perceive technology differently. However, there is an almost complete absence of literature covering the topic of the impact that the diversity of nationalities within the firm might have on employees' change readiness.

More than one-fifth of workforce diversity literature deals with performance, job satisfaction, and collaboration. Still, the relationship between the diversity of the firm and employees' willingness to embrace changes has scarcely been analyzed. It is a particularly relevant issue concerning healthcare companies operating in culturally diverse settings. Moreover, the existing literature was written by researchers who worked in developed countries. Therefore, it is unlikely that their findings might be applied to UAE healthcare companies.

In addition to that, another one of the greatest contrasts here is the approach towards Human Resources and digital transformation planning being perceived as objects. Little research is available on the means by which Human Resources could work with digital transformation planning in order to ensure the success of organizational changes. Hence, this study will try to fill the gap by examining the effect of Human Resources strategy on organizational readiness for change in the context of multicultural organizations working in the United Arab Emirates' health care sector.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The above-mentioned study was based on Human Capital Theory, Technology Acceptance Model, and Unified Theory of

Acceptance and Use of Technology aimed at assessing how planning Human Resources might serve as a means of preparing employees to changes in healthcare organizations where employees belong to different cultures.

Human Capital Theory considers the knowledge, skills, and abilities of employees as essential organizational resources. One of the key assumptions of this theory is the following: a company will be able to improve its effectiveness through the education and training of its employees. In other words, in a health care organization, employees with various skill sets capable of working with new technological solutions would be a useful resource.

According to the Technology Acceptance Model, a very important issue in terms of increasing employees' intention to use new technology refers to their perception of the utility and simplicity of new technology. Apart from the issues of technology exposure and training, HR activities emphasize the importance of human factors in implementing a technology innovation, since it provides a path towards a successful experience of employees in relation to a certain technology.

According to the UTAUT model, there are four main factors affecting the employee's technology usage: perception of usefulness of the technology in enhancing their job performance, perceived effort required from them to utilize the technology, the impact of social factors on them, and the availability of facilitating conditions. HR plans are really useful in this respect.¹

¹⁵Theres, C., & Strohmeier, S. (2024). Consolidating the theoretical foundations of digital human resource management acceptance and use research: A meta-analytic validation of UTAUT. *Management Review Quarterly*, 74(4), 2683–27153.

¹⁶. Schultz, T. W. (1961). Investment in human capital. *American Economic Review*, 51(1), 1–17.

¹⁷. Dessler, G. (2020). *Human resource management* (16th ed.). Pearson.

Combining both theories, we can state that HR plans play an important role in preparing employees for change. Plans may not only be helpful in skill acquisition by the employees, but they also serve to increase their confidence in using new technologies. Employees coming from different cultural environments within the UAE's healthcare organization might behave in certain ways while using technology, which will be influenced by change readiness. Theorizing emphasizes the possibilities of culture-sensitive HR plans in helping facilitate change readiness. Thus, we can suggest that Human Resource plans can greatly assist employees in acquiring skills necessary for the utilization of technology.

DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

First, the research underscores the fact that HR programs play an important role in preparing healthcare companies to embrace changes.

Objective 1: HR strategies will be significantly important for health care organizations undergoing significant change. In response to the expanding needs for technology as well as more rigorous standards for patient care and regulation compliance, HR functions will evolve in importance. Sound HR strategies that involve training, effective communication, and strengthening leadership capabilities will form a nimble workforce capable of embracing change with greater confidence and effectiveness, thus reducing transition resistance and bolstering staff morale. Evidence supports strong HR practices and increasing the organization's receptivity to change. Organizations that rely on strong HR practices tend to have more engaged, willing, and adaptive

18. Fenwick, A., Molnar, G., & Frangos, P. (2024). The critical role of HRM in AI-driven digital transformation: A paradigm shift to enable firms to move from AI implementation to human-centric adoption. *Discover Artificial Intelligence*, 4, 34.

workforces. Effective HR management may be particularly influential for easing massive changes in organizational processes and functions to improve performance.

Objective 2: The influence of diversity will have a significant impact on innovation in health care. An increase in diversity by culture, age, and various employee experiences will foster enhanced innovation. Diversity leads to increased creativity and greater problem-solving capacity. An increased variety of experiences will contribute to better ideation and solution generation. Such variety will also encourage broader communication within an organization, as more ideas will be shared amongst employees with differing experiences. Information will be able to spread faster as well, which may help the organization react to external challenges more readily. It will be up to managers to be aware and responsible for not misinterpretations occurring as a result of diversity, as it is expected that employees will foster new ideas as well as more quickly and effectively bring those ideas to life. Employee ideas will likely be disseminated throughout the organization more quickly, leading to greater and more widespread acceptance and use by health care professionals. Innovative ideas should flourish with the introduction of diverse members, leading to higher-quality work and thus improved organizational performance.

Objective 3: The implementation of new technology in the health care field will be impacted significantly by the employees' adaptation to organizational change. As the organization begins to incorporate technology such as information systems and AI, staff will require training and support with new work practices and skills development. Clear communication and managing change will be key to overcoming resistance and anxiety. Training and ongoing education, as well as technical support, will greatly enhance an

individual's willingness to embrace technological advancements. Being upfront with staff regarding the advantages of these new technologies, as well as mitigating their fears about changes, will likely improve acceptance and buy-in. Research will likely uncover more methods for adapting employees, such as regular training, reinforcement of leadership roles, and user-friendly systems. When organizations support their staff during such transitions, they should see increased employee buy-in. The skills of the workforce will be improved, and productivity will increase as well. Tech implementation in health care facilities will go much more smoothly with the adaptation support.

Objective 4: The impact of readiness on organizational change within the health care field will be substantial. These organizations must constantly be ahead of rapid technological advancement and patient needs, while simultaneously adhering to strict guidelines and enduring high competition. This demands effective leadership, HR strategies, stakeholder involvement, continuing education, and support for a work environment conducive to adaptation. Identifying current organizational weaknesses and strengths in terms of readiness will further enhance its success in navigating change, thereby offering practical suggestions for successful implementation. These insights might guide how to invest in worker education and provide leadership communication more effectively. Such solutions as breaking down information silos and fostering collaboration to encourage innovation could additionally help provide organizations with a strong plan and support system. With the appropriate changes and adjustments, health care organizations will be better equipped for future events, with workers more receptive and resilient to change.

SUGGESTIONS

Healthcare organizations have to focus on boosting their staff's digital skills through training. When we think about managing performance, including competency assessments in our plans is a must. To foster a positive atmosphere, HR policies ought to stress the importance of diversity and mix various backgrounds fairly. Developing future leaders who drive change is also key—they need programs that breed transformational managers. Leaders themselves must see technology as a chance to enhance performance and dive into digital learning and pro-development classes.

Also, keeping team members informed during transitions is huge. We need open lines of communication to keep everyone looped in and feeling in the know. It's smart to grow a culture that thrives on innovation and rolls with tech-driven changes. This means letting people experiment with new stuff and making the most of the latest tools out there.

CONCLUSION

Digital transformation is changing modern healthcare by mixing tech with the skills of excited professionals. Making this work means having great HR management. HR pros need to upgrade staff skills, boost engagement, support leaders, and grow a continuous learning culture. In the UAE's diverse healthcare setting, HR must include inclusivity in its planning. For these strategies to succeed, they've got to be welcoming to all cultures. This enhances teamwork and makes tech integration easier. By taking these steps, healthcare providers can execute their digital plans, stay ahead, and beat the competition.